

ERIOGONUM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3 NO. 3 December 2011



***Eriogonum umbellatum*, Sulfur Flower**

Photo of 4-year plants, Gardnerville, Nevada nursery

First year seedlings are in rows to the left

A Message from the President

Dear Eriogonum Society Members:

About seven years ago, my wife and I took a vacation and did some camping in the Pioneer Mountains of central Idaho. This pristine area has become a favorite destination spot for my family and provides wonderful opportunities for camping, fishing, hiking, and generally getting away from the pressures of life. On this particular occasion, we made a hiking excursion into Brockie Lake, a beautiful high-elevation cirque lake reachable only after a bone-jarring drive up a five mile long jeep trail and a long walk that includes an elevation rise of about 3,500 feet. The scenery along this hike is ever-changing but always spectacular. On this particular occasion, a wonderful surprise was waiting. As we approached the lake, at an elevation of 10,000 feet, we walked into a large rocky meadow filled with oval-leaf buckwheat (*Eriogonum ovalifolium* var. *depressum*) in full bloom. The new flowers were off-white, but as they aged they were fading into a riot of pink, orange, and dark red. Needless to say, I was hooked. Since that time, my appetite for the genus *Eriogonum* has never waned. I was truly excited when a group of people came together to form an organization of like-minded folks.

We owe much to the founders, Bob McFarlane, Hugh Mac Millan, and James Reveal. We have been in existence for about two years; long enough to accumulate a sustainable number of members, generate adequate operating funds, and hold two outstanding annual meetings. It seems as though the hard work should be done. But, I am quickly finding that we still much to do to put the organization on firm footing for the long haul.

However, I am confident that we will succeed. How can we fail with the kind of people we have working in the organization? We have a tremendous group of individuals who have stepped up to serve as officers. In the background we have the most knowledgeable individuals in the *Eriogonum* world helping and advising us. We have volunteers stepping up to organize annual meetings, and now have several offers of invitation for future meetings. Tentatively, it looks as though we will be visiting Steen's Mountain in Oregon next year, northern New Mexico in 2013, and southern Idaho in 2014.

But, as with any young organization, we have much to do. If we are to succeed with this fledgling group, it will be essential that we serve the interests of the members. What are those interests? For each member, the expectations may be quite different. The challenge will be to find common ground and generate interest in the ground that may not be quite so common. We will be working toward understanding member desires over the next year and in so doing establish some direction for the organization. We also have practical tasks ahead of us. In the next couple of years, we will need to adopt some firm by-laws and operating procedures. We will need to firm up procedures for ensuring quality annual meetings. We will need to encourage and train new leadership for the society. Most importantly, we need to find productive ways advance the appreciation, education, and preservation of the genus that unites us.

During the next few months, I will be seeking input from the membership to help us find direction and establish meaningful programs. As officers, if we can get started in the right direction, we can better meet your expectations. So, what do we need to know? We need indications of what will attract you to the annual meetings. For example, is member interest leaning toward *Eriogonum* culture and aesthetic appreciation or toward science-based taxonomy and biology education? Are there other things we

should do and see at our meetings? Here are some other pertinent questions: Do we want to become a publisher and distributor of information about the genus *Eriogonum*? Do we want to become an effective and visible promoter of *Eriogonum* conservation? Are there other things that we should be doing that have yet to be considered? Together, we can work through these ideas and see what shakes out.

I am looking forward to serving and working with all of you. Thank you for extending yourself into this organization. I hope the time and effort you put into the *Eriogonum* Society will return personal benefits back to you.

Stephen Love

President

Eriogonum Board of Directors – 2012

Dr. James Reveal, Advisor (ex-officio) and Scientific Advisor

President – Stephen Love

Vice-President – Kathy Pyle

Treasurer – Randy Tatroe

Membership Chair – Bob Pennington

Seed Exchange Manager – Ray Fletcher

Newsletter Editor – Cheryl Beyer

Webmaster (es-officio) – Hugh Mac Millan

Advisor (ex-officio) – Bob McFarlane



First year seedling, Sulfur Flower, Gardnerville, NV

Board of Directors Introductions

James Reveal: My research interests include floristic studies in North America (including endangered and threatened species), examination of historical specimens gathered in temperate North America, monographic studies on *Polygonaceae* subfam. *Eriogonoideae* especially *Eriogoneae*, botanical nomenclature, history of botanical explorations in the New World, and a review of suprageneric nomenclature including an evaluation of systems of classification of extant vascular plants at and above the family level. I am an Adjunct Professor of Plant Biology at Cornell University in association with the L. H. Bailey Hortorium and as an Honorary Curator at the New York Botanical Garden.

[Editor's Note: You can find more biographical information about our scientific advisor at:

<http://www.plantsystematics.org/reveal/pbio/WWW/cvjlir.html>]

Stephen Love: Hello everyone! I will be serving as the President of the *Eriogonum* Society during 2012. I am a 27-year employee of the University of Idaho and am employed at the Aberdeen R & E Center in the southeast part of that state. I am a horticulturist and plant breeder by training. After spending 20 years as a potato geneticist and breeder (very appropriate for someone working in Idaho), I made a lateral move into Consumer Horticulture Extension. As part of this program, I started a native plant evaluation and domestication project. In the intervening years, I have obtained seed and evaluated over 1,200

accessions of Intermountain West native plants! It was during this work that I discovered and fell in love with the genus *Eriogonum*. I have found the species in this genus to be remarkably valuable specimens for low-water landscapes and gardens. For this reason, I did not hesitate to join and serve in an organization that annually brings *Eriogonum* aficionados together.

Kathy Pyle: When I walked into my first *Eriogonum* Society conference last summer in Bishop, the sight of unfamiliar and serious-looking people huddled over dissecting kits almost sent me running from the room. Then I met Stephen Love from Idaho, John Anderson from Arizona, Bob McFarlane and Hugh Mac Millan from Colorado, and was also delighted to learn that botanist Margaret Widdowson is a Scottish rock gardener from Redding, California. I began to recognize NARGS (North American Rock Garden Society) members in the crowd. Ray Fletcher lent me a hand lens and Rachel Fletcher gave me pointers on shopping for a new camera. What had been a room full of strangers quickly became a group of new botanizing buddies.

One familiar face was pressed in the pages on Dr. Jim Reveal's desk. It was the *Eriogonum giganteum* specimen Kim O'Connor brought to the lab. I grew up in Ventura, California, gateway to the Channel Islands. My father is a native of Santa Catalina Island; so is *E. giganteum*, or "St. Catherine's Lace." That majestic buckwheat remains one of my favorite childhood memory plants.

I've earned a living as a writer/editor specializing in horticulture and have also worked in marketing (plants, pears and a music festival). My careers as trade magazine editor/advertising copywriter have taken me all over the country, including Los Angeles, the Chicago suburbs, Iowa, New Hampshire, Austin, Texas, and Oregon twice. I now live (temporarily) in southeastern Oregon and work as development coordinator for the nonprofit Malheur Field Station (on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge). Other passions besides plants include baseball, poetry, microbrews and hiking with my two terriers, Juan and Paco.

Randy Tatroe: We'll catch up with Randy in the next newsletter.

Bob Pennington: Hi, I'm Bob Pennington, your new membership chair. Along with my wife, Jeni, my parents and our very young children, we started Agua Fria Nursery, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, way back in 1975. At the time we knew very little either about nurseries, or about business in general, so we did what made sense to us. Within our first year we started growing many native plants, and found it necessary to learn how to id plants in the wild, and about harvesting seed for our own use. Perhaps Penstemons were our first foray into excessive genus culture, but *Eriogonums* were very exciting and difficult to id, hence our interest in a society which would help us solve that problem. Anyway, were are still learning the processes of id'ing, collecting, growing, and selling many wild things.

Ray Fletcher: I received my B.S. degree in genetics from U.C. Davis in 1986. After graduating, my wife Rachel and I moved to San Diego California where I worked as a research associate in both public and private research institutions. We moved with our children to Reno Nevada in 1993. At this time, I left the work force to stay at home to help raise our son Jim and our daughter Emily. I am an avid gardener of native North American plants and hardy cacti and succulents from around the world. I am equally

enthusiastic about observing and appreciating native plants in the field. It's a privilege to be able to serve as the Seed Exchange Chair for the Eriogonum Society.

Cheryl Beyer: We'll catch up with Cheryl in the next newsletter.

Hugh Mac Millan: My two lifelong passions have been hiking and gardening. Since I hike primarily in the Western U.S. it is not surprising that *Eriogonums*, *Penstemons*, *Drabas* and other Western species became necessities in the garden. As my interest turned to passion, and finally to obsession, I was mystified to learn there was no Eriogonum Society. After many conversations with friends, Bob MacFarlane and I decided to take a stab at forming the society. Now that we have our first Board, I chose to retain the webmaster position. I have been an IT professional for several decades with experience in a Fortune 500 financial company and a major telecommunications entity.

My history with various plants societies includes the following: **North American Rock Garden Society** - Life member, past webmaster. I redesigned the website in 2009, adding a substantial forum portal, image gallery, and wiki; **Rocky Mountain Chapter of NARGS** - Current webmaster, past Treasurer. Registrar and Transportation Chair for two hosted national meetings of NARGS. Created the Chapter website; **American Penstemon Society** - Current webmaster, Current Chair, 2012 Annual Meeting to be held in Laramie, Wyoming. Redesigned website in 2005; **Eriogonum Society** - Co-founder, Registrar for meetings in Reno in 2010 and Bishop in 2011.

Bob MacFarlane: I was born and raised in California and attended Stanford earning BS, MS, and PhD degrees in Petroleum Engineering. I worked with the Chevron Oil Company for 15 years and held positions of Chief Production Engineer for ARAMCO in Saudi Arabia and Chief Engineer in Denver. I also worked for Scientific Software - Intercomp Corporation as Vice President and President for another 15 years. After retiring in the early 1990's my wife of 54 years, Phoebe, and I have spent a lot of time traveling, camping, helping with 8 grandchildren, gardening, and enjoying the outdoors. Phoebe and I have resided in a suburb of Denver for the past 36 years.

I just saw some wild buckwheats near Bishop one day while hiking and gathered a few seeds. They grew into nice plants in our garden and I wanted to learn more about them!



Indian paintbrush mixed with wild buckwheat, along the Shirley Trail, Squaw Valley, California

Quiz for the day: Do you know these plants? Name the two plants on this page; answer is at the bottom.



**Plant A - pussy paws, *Calyptridium* in the Portulacaceae/Montiaceae.
Plant B - Lobb's wild buckwheat, *Eriogonum lobbii*.**

THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE/MEETING
Malheur Field Station, OREGON
“High, Dry, Sublime – Oregon’s Great Basin Buckwheats”
July 19-22, 2012

The third annual meeting of the Eriogonum Society will be held at the Malheur Field Station, southeastern Oregon, from the 19th to the 22nd of July. Featured will be:

- Field trips to Steens Mountain and the Alvord Basin
- Eriogonum lab with Dr. James Reveal
- Propagation workshop

Save the date! Registration will open soon in 2012!

Submissions to the newsletter

Do you have a favorite Eriogonum you would like to write about and submit to the **Eriogonum Society Newsletter**? Or would you like to write an essay on topic you’d like to share? Do you have corrections to a past newsletter, or have a letter to the editor you’d like published? Please send your article to the newsletter editor, whose email address is below.

Eriogonum Society Contacts:

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Seed Exchange	Ray Fletcher	plant_man@sbcglobal.net
Newsletter editor	Cheryl Beyer	cbeyer@fs.fed.us

Articles for the Newsletter: If you are interested in writing or submitting an article to future newsletters, please notify one of the above contacts. Thank you!

Membership Renewal

The Eriogonum Society has attracted over 100 people who love eriogonums and are interested in learning more about them. A number of our members had a great time at our first annual meeting in Reno and we look forward to our next one in the White Mountains of California next August (2011). Our dues include qualification to register for our annual meetings, as well as an on-line newsletter, annual seed exchange and access to the members section of our website.

Dues run on a calendar basis, renewed at the first of each year.

Dues for all except students are \$10. Dues for students are \$5. Life Membership is \$150. In addition, members may pay two years in advance and receive the third year free. Please do not send cash.

You may pay either by check or by PayPal on our website at <http://erigonum.org>. Make checks payable to Eriogonum Society. Mail a completed form and check to:

Bob Pennington, Membership
1409 Agua Fria, Santa Fe, NM 87505-0907

Please update any current info with new phone numbers or e-mail addresses. Thanks for your enthusiastic support of the Society

Name-_____

Address-_____

Phone #-_____

E-Mail-_____

We do not sell, share or distribute member data in any manner.



Wright's wild buckwheat, *Eriogonum wrightii*, near Carson Pass, California